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Introduction

Children come to our Early Care and Education (ECE) programs with a wide range of background experiences with language, storytelling, picture books, and printed text. Each child has a unique set of literacy experiences based on the culture, traditions, and routines of their family and the community in which they live. Some families teach children sayings, expressions, and rhymes that reflect their particular language and cultural values. Other families and caregivers may engage children through oral storytelling—a rich cultural tradition which may or may not be associated with printed text. Some children may have books read to them in their home language(s) and/or the language of their ECE environment, while other children’s experience with printed text may primarily be with environmental print—print that is unique to the community in which they live.

Knowing the literacy practices of dual language learners (DLLs) and their families is important for accessing and building on children’s experiences with oral language and printed text. By acknowledging and building on these important early experiences, ECE practitioners can help DLLs more readily make connections with new and different literacy experiences in their ECE programs. Of course, oral language (e.g., listening and speaking) is central to both teaching and learning about print during the early years. Thus, DLLs will need relevant and effective language supports to engage with literacy experiences in a new or less familiar language. By building on DLLs’ prior experiences and by providing individualized



language supports during literacy activities, ECE practitioners can help DLLs develop the necessary oral language and literacy skills needed for future academic success.

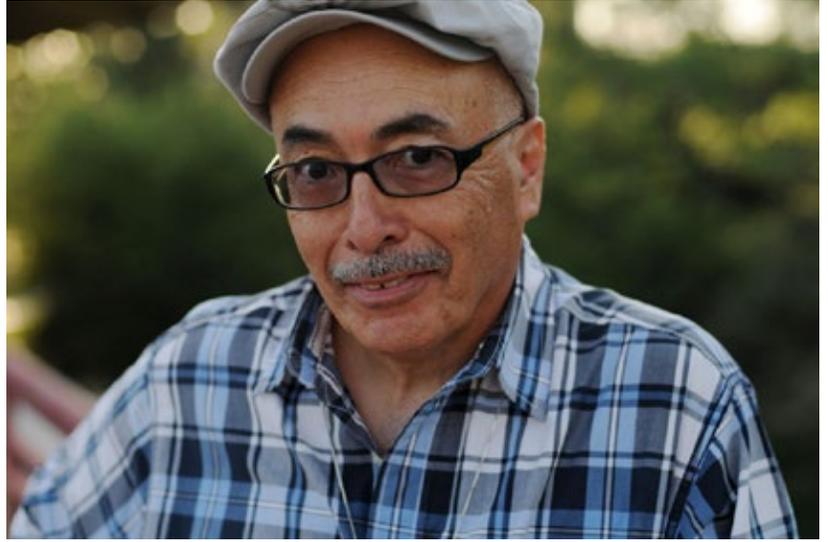
This Focus Bulletin explores different ways for “growing” oral language while supporting early literacy development of DLLs. Specifically, the bulletin addresses the following topics:

- Literacy as a social and cultural practice
- Connecting oral language and early literacy development
- Partnering with families to support early literacy development in DLLs’ home language(s) and English
- Supporting DLLs during Read Alouds in English

WIDA Early Years Focus Bulletins are published as a resource for practitioners who support, instruct, and assess DLLs in ECE programs. To see additional Focus Bulletins, please visit: wida.us/EarlyYears

Literacy as a Social and Cultural Practice

When we think of literacy, we often think of the isolated acts of reading or writing. While reading and writing are an essential part of literacy, these terms alone don't communicate the *social and cultural* nature of literacy. It's important to remember that literacy always involves the act of communicating a message for a specific purpose and takes place within a specific sociocultural context. In other words, literacy involves more than the rote reading or writing of symbols and printed text. It encompasses all the cultural nuances and meaning of oral language that lie behind the written word—words which are arranged and communicated in a specific manner depending on their audience and intended purpose (e.g., grocery lists, market signs, short poems). Remember that DLLs will be learning the early literacy practices and associated conventions of two or more languages and cultures—all within a variety of social contexts!



Juan Felipe Herrera, photo courtesy of Blue Flower Arts

There are many different pathways to literacy. The *oral tradition* of storytelling is one pathway that is often overlooked or undervalued in U.S. culture. However, families from cultures who emphasize oral traditions over printed text are providing their children with examples of rich vocabulary and a variety of complex language structures—all of which provide an unshakable foundation for DLLs to become proficient readers and writers. Families may use traditional rhymes, poems, songs, and oral stories for a variety of purposes: to teach valued cultural beliefs and morals, to transmit and preserve family history and cultural traditions, or to simply entertain listeners.

Hearing and interacting with lots of rich language during the early years helps children learn to attend to sounds (phonology), make meaning and expand their vocabulary (semantics), and express themselves in increasingly complex (syntax) and socioculturally acceptable ways (pragmatics). In turn, the development of strong oral language skills become the solid foundation for learning to read and write (Resnik & Snow, 2008; Roskos, Tabors, & Lenhart, 2004).

To demonstrate the immense power of a strong oral language tradition as a pathway to literacy, consider the following examples:

Juan Felipe Herrera, a child of Mexican migrant farmworkers, became the first Mexican American U.S. poet laureate in September 2015. Herrera came from a rich oral tradition in which his mother, who had a 3rd grade education, routinely recited poetry, sang songs and told stories to him. Herrera has said that growing up in a migrant family with the varying landscapes, the storytelling, sayings, songs, riddles, and proverbs was like “living in literature every day.” (National Public Radio Interview, September 15, 2015) Herrera writes poetry in English and Spanish.

Zulmara Cline and Juan Necochea grew up in homes with rich oral traditions in which their parents spoke no English, there were few books, and they were not read to regularly. Yet they went on to achieve high levels of literacy in two languages, becoming very accomplished university professors and writers. As Cline and Necochea so eloquently state in the following excerpt from “My Mother Never Read to Me”: *Neither of us had mothers who read to us; however, we did have families that cared and had hopes and dreams of academic success for their children. We also had families where strong oral traditions of storytelling, family anecdotes, tall tales, and embellished legacies were the norm.*

Within those families we learned the nuances and intricacies of our home language, thus laying a foundation for the English literacy we would develop at U.S. schools. (Cline & Necochea, 2003, p 125)

What it means to be “literate” varies according to the culture and the social context in which reading and writing occur. For example, some families read and write the signs and symbols associated with buying or selling in the marketplace. Other cultures may emphasize teaching very young children how to write before teaching them to read. Many cultures believe it is the role of the teacher, not the parents, to read to children and to teach them how to read and write upon school entry. And of course, other families or primary caregivers may talk about picture books and read stories with children at home beginning when they are infants or toddlers—or even prenatally!

Reading with infants and toddlers probably sounds like a familiar practice to many ECE practitioners in the United States. That’s because the language and literacy practices we typically advocate using with children, ages birth–5 years, are informed by the cultural values and beliefs of mainstream North American, English-speaking culture. According to this culture, children are treated as conversational partners from birth and are quickly encouraged to “display their ability to talk” by answering frequent questions and initiating conversations with others (Paradis, Genesee, & Crago, 2011). They are also exposed to literacy activities such as phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, book awareness, and concepts of print long before they are expected to read—all in preparation for participating in the “culture’s valued educational practice of reading” (Paradis, Genesee, & Crago, 2011, p.28). These same language and literacy practices—deemed essential for Kindergarten readiness in the 21st century—are reflected in Head Start Early Learning Outcomes and states’ Early Learning Standards.

The ways in which children are expected to participate in literacy activities in our ECE settings may be new for DLLs. Sometimes these expectations may even conflict with how DLLs have been socialized to use language with adults and/or in large group situations. ECE practitioners need to be sensitive to families’ literacy practices as they help build on the early language and literacy experiences of DLLs in their programs.

Connecting Oral Language and Early Literacy Development

Lynette Perlikiewicz is a preschool teacher in Albuquerque, NM. She works in a school district program. The majority of the DLLs in her classroom speak Spanish.

Lynette notices that several children are busily building roads, bridges, train tracks, and other structures in the block area. She also notices that one of the DLLs in her group, Guillermo, is excited about how the train moves along the track. She realizes this is a perfect opportunity to ask Guillermo to tell her a story about what he has been doing with his friends. Mindful of Guillermo’s developing English, Lynette knows she may need to periodically cue Guillermo and scaffold for language as he dictates his story to her.



Lynette: Guillermo, tell me your story!

Guillermo: Ummmmm... (*shrugs his shoulders and looks at teacher*).

Lynette: Well...I see you and your friends have been building something. Tell me a story about what you made (*she sweeps her hand over block structure*).

Guillermo: Ohhh...we make ‘dis... (*points to track and road*) for train! Look, it go here! (*as he points to the winding road*).

Lynette: Wow! You made a long track (*as she sweeps her finger along the track/road*).

Guillermo: Yeah..track...really long (*walks along track while pointing how far it goes*).

Lynette: How did you make that?

Guillermo: With blocks! I put ‘dis one here. Mike put one...’dere! Mira, it go down!

Lynette: Oh... What happens next?

Guillermo: It go really, really fast!

Lynette: Oh...What goes really, really fast?

Guillermo: Ummm...train...it go really fast.

Lynette: Then what happens?

Guillermo: Then...then train crash...here (*makes crashing sound and points to bottom of ramp*).

Lynette: Oh my! What happens next?

Guillermo: Hmmm...the end!

Lynette: Thanks Guillermo! Let me read your story back to you. I want to make sure I got it right (*she reads the story aloud pointing to each word as she reads*). Does that sound right?

Guillermo: Mhmm... (*nods head*).

Lynette: Would you act your story out for us at Story Time? (*uses gestures for acting out and points to the rug where story time is held*) You can choose friends to help you.

Guillermo: Yay! (*Guillermo claps his hands excitedly*) I want Mike and Diego! (*points to each friend*)

Lynette: Sounds great! Can’t wait to see you act out your story for us!

Lynette uses children’s storytelling/dictation and story acting to help foster oral language and literacy development of 4 year olds in her classroom. She knows that oral language forms the necessary foundation for learning to read and write. Lynette also knows that listening, speaking, reading, and writing develop together and early in life. That’s why Lynette uses the storytelling and story acting approach in addition to reading

“Narrative abilities are also essential to success in reading and writing, and ST/SA [storytelling/story acting] provides a bridge between the contextualized speech of young children and the decontextualized language of books and reading (Snow, 1983)...ST/SA is a step in the direction of decontextualized speech, generally set in the immediate context. However, ST/SA has contextual cues—tone of voice, gesture, and movement—all of which helps convey the meaning of words. In this way ST/SA acts as a bridge between the dominant languages of early childhood to the more abstract language of literacy.” (Mardell, 2013, p. 61).

story books aloud in her classroom. By doing so, Lynette gives DLLs extra opportunities to practice using the narrative structure while processing and producing oral language that is contextualized (e.g., takes place within immediate or very recent context with cues such as tone of voice, gestures, movement, and visual supports). Story telling/story acting also provides DLLs who come from cultures that emphasize the oral storytelling tradition with a natural vehicle for actively participating in classroom literacy activities from the “get-go.”

Each day Lynette asks several children to tell her their story while they are working in a learning center during free-choice play. Built-in contextual cues (e.g., the materials children are playing with, pointing and gesturing by children and adults) support DLLs in doing this. As children tell Lynette their story, she writes it down on paper. Later, she will read the story aloud, pointing to each word as the child acts out his or her story with chosen peers for the entire group. This dramatization enables DLLs to give expressive meaning and physical representation to their own ideas while affording them yet another opportunity to hear their words spoken in a narrative format. As an audience member, story acting also gives DLLs multiple opportunities to practice listening to the grammatical structures and phrases associated with

producing narratives by their English-speaking peers—all embedded within everyday events and familiar classroom materials! They are then able to make meaning of language



as their peers provide interpretive gestures to the words being read.

Children may also choose to illustrate their dictated story—providing yet another opportunity for DLLs to make meaning of the spoken and written words of their own stories as well as those of their peers.

DLLs who are new to English, or who simply prefer speaking in Spanish, may choose to dictate their story in Spanish while Lynnette records it for her Spanish-speaking assistant to translate minutes later. Children are then able to act out the story in Spanish and/or English, depending on the peers the storyteller selects for dramatization. In this way, DLLs are able to use both their home languages and English while learning the narrative structure associated with each language and culture.

Lynette is also able to easily assess children’s oral language and understanding of the basic elements of stories. In the above vignette, Lynette notices that Guillermo’s oral language has progressed substantially from 2-word phrases to 3-4 word sentences. She also makes a mental note of how she might model the /th/ sound during a shared reading experience to help Guillermo practice articulating a sound that doesn’t exist in his home language. Lynette chooses a shared reading format which uses a choral response because she knows that Guillermo will be able to hear and practice making the sound in a safe way that doesn’t call attention to him. Finally, she notes that she may want to add the word “track” to the word wall and initiate a discussion with the entire class about how trains move on “tracks” and other vehicles move on roads, while using sensory supports (e.g., toys and nonfiction books). In that way, she can help Guillermo continue to expand his vocabulary using topics that interest him while assessing which other children may need help with this word.

In terms of understanding the language associated with story structure, Lynette notices that Guillermo now understands the concept of “next” when telling a story. He is able to relate a sequence of events with the simple cue “what happens next.” When cued with “then what happens,” Guillermo also uses the word “then” to mark the next event in his story. He has included himself and one other child as characters who construct something a certain way to make a train go fast. Guillermo also knows that in order to conclude his story, he needs to use the phrase “the end.”



Lynette is excited with Guillermo’s ongoing progress with using the basic elements of storytelling in his narratives! She will include Guillermo’s story dictation as an artifact in his portfolio and use it to document his progress in English language development and early literacy using the formative assessment tools approved by her ECE program.

“My goal for all the 4 year-old DLLs in my program is that they can communicate a “solid” story in their home language and in English by the end of the year. I am ever mindful of the possible cultural varieties in how stories are narrated, but basically, I want DLLs to be able to understand that stories have a beginning, a middle, and an end. To help scaffold for language in English, I observe DLLs and use the E-ELD Performance Definitions to estimate where they are in English language development. I then set individual language goals for each DLL in storytelling, always striving to help them learn the words, phrases, and language structures they need to connect and communicate their thoughts orally in increasingly complex ways. I love watching how their stories develop over time! They become quite adept at identifying characters in their stories, narrating events, and constructing “plots” at their level of E-ELD!”

~Lynette Perlikiewicz, preschool teacher, Albuquerque Public Schools, Albuquerque, NM

Partnering with Families to Support Early Literacy in the Home Language(s) and English

Learning how families approach literacy at home and in their communities happens over time through respectful and reciprocal relationships. Providing welcoming environments which incorporate the languages and cultures of families within the ECE program goes a long way toward building trust and respect. Home visits with bilingual/bicultural interpreters, if possible, are also an important vehicle for developing partnerships with families. Asking families about their traditions and customs around storytelling, singing songs, or reciting rhymes in their home language(s) is a great first step in learning about literacy practices at home.

Practitioners can both reassure and encourage families of the important contribution that talking, singing, and telling and/or reading stories in their home languages makes to their children's future academic success in English. Practitioners can also share the literacy activities they are emphasizing in their program during home visits. Together, families and practitioners can build on the many linguistic and cultural resources DLLs have at their disposal to support their growth in early literacy.

Here are some concrete ways that practitioners in the field partner with families to incorporate and build upon DLLs' early literacy experiences in their programs when they don't speak the children's home language(s).



Photo courtesy of Office of Head Start

Picture collage stories of children's families are incorporated throughout Keshia Kruchten's Head Start classroom in Ladysmith, WI. Keshia constructs collages with children and their families using photos or drawings they provide. Families and their children decide what to use and how to tell their own unique story. Families, practitioners, and interpreters can then write down the story that children want to tell about their families next to the pictures on the collage. This is especially powerful for culturally and linguistically diverse families who may not be equally represented within the ECE environment. This is a great literacy activity for ECE programs to do with families during family activity nights! The family collages are then displayed throughout the classroom at children's eye level for them to see and talk about daily!



Families and/or community volunteers are invited to teach children traditional songs, rhymes, and short stories in their home language. Some ECE practitioners invite the families of DLLs to teach rhymes, poems, sayings, and songs in their home languages to the entire group of children every week. This practice serves several important purposes:

- It helps children see that the home languages and cultures of all children are equally valued and important. Doing this regularly and consistently makes other languages and cultures an integral part of the classroom culture.
- DLLs become the experts in language and culture during these times and monolingual English-speaking children experience what it is like to be learning another language. Practitioners can reinforce DLLs' role of expert by

incorporating the rhymes, sayings, and songs taught by families and adult volunteers into the daily curriculum. In this way, DLLs are able to teach others as well as extend their own learning regarding their rich cultural and linguistic traditions.

- By sharing their vast cultural and linguistic resources with the entire group, families experience being valued members of their children's ECE community in authentic ways. By leading and participating in children's learning activities, families also directly impact the culture of the ECE setting in positive ways that enrich everyone's learning.
- As a result of seeing powerful adults speaking and sharing in their home languages on a regular basis in the ECE setting, DLLs begin to feel more comfortable using their home languages throughout the day. Practitioners in high quality ECE settings understand how important it is for DLLs to continue developing their home languages as they learn English. They encourage DLLs to use self-talk, share comments, and express their ideas and feelings.

Books are recorded by families in home languages for the classroom. Jeanne Williams, a teacher of 3-year-olds in Florida, has a simple, interactive "lift the flap" book recorded by parents in the home language available for DLLs to listen to all day. Jeanne sends the book, *Where is Baby's Belly Button?* and a digital recorder home with children so families can "read" with their children in their own languages. After the children have heard the book "read" to them (and recorded) at home, the families send the recordings and books back to the classroom for the children to keep in their cubbies to listen to whenever they feel the need.

Jeanne says that using the book paired with the parent's voice recording in DLLs' home languages serves several purposes. "First, it gives DLLs, who are new to English, an important social and emotional support in the classroom. When they feel afraid, tired, frustrated, or lost with the new language, they have the comfort of a family member's voice in a familiar language reading to them as they follow along. It's also a great entry point for social interactions with other children as English-speaking peers are intrigued with both the book and the voice recording.

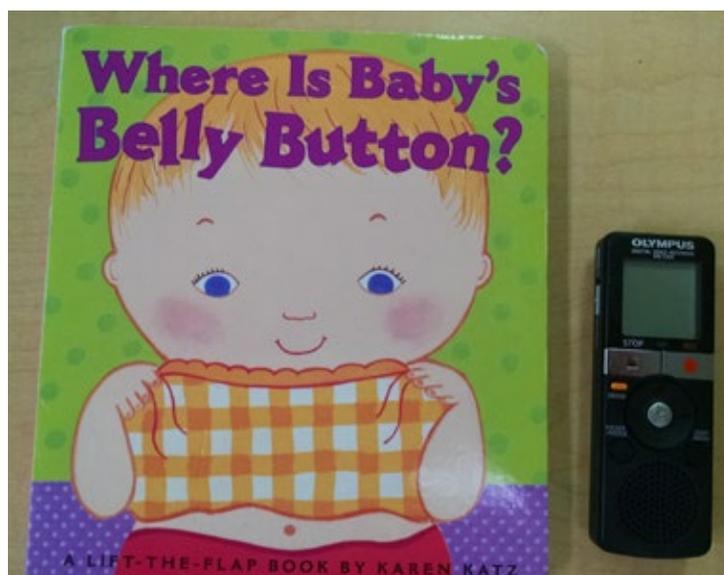
Basically, I chose this particular book because it's interactive, children love it, it's easy for families to talk about (i.e., read) with their child, and it hits different aspects of our curriculum such as identifying body parts, spatial prepositions, and concepts of print."

Books reflect the languages and cultures of DLLs and their families.

"It is so important for the children to see themselves reflected in the literature in our classroom. It increases their confidence and engagement and makes them feel a part of valued literature. The curriculum we use in my program has books recommended for each unit of study. I have noticed that the books are culturally and linguistically diverse, and this is a great help. Additionally, I visit my local library in advance of the unit of study and enlist the help of the children's librarian.

I have copied down book selections from peers, professors, and others in the field to increase my knowledge of appropriate books for my culturally and linguistically diverse children. Availing myself to websites like colorincolorado.org or wida.us is another way to inform my practice. Really taking the time to get to know my DLL children and their families and plan for their enhanced experience in my classroom takes a lot of extra work—but it is the only way to effectively honor their languages and cultures and do them justice in my lesson plans."

~ Jeanne Williams, preschool teacher, The Learning Tree, Temple Beth El, Ft. Myers, FL



A Basic Checklist for Selecting Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Picture Books

- Does your collection include books that
- Represent all of the cultures, languages, and ethnicities in your program?
 - Share immigrant and refugee experiences?
 - Positively represent the diversity of families?
 - Depict children and adults working together to promote justice and change?
 - Break gender stereotypes?

Culturally responsive picture books represent people respectfully and as real human beings. Their messages enhance the self-image of children from diverse backgrounds. Keep these things in mind as you review books:

- Check for stereotypes, culture portrayed as costume/object, tokenism, inappropriate dialects, derogatory terms, and the invisibility of particular groups in the illustrations and the story.
- Look for hidden messages regarding different lifestyles within the illustrations and story.
- Check the background and perspective of the author and illustrator and note the copyright date.

For more information, please see the Resources and Further Reading listed on page 12.

Community volunteers, K-12 and/or college students read with DLLs in their home languages. In addition to thoughtful book selection, practitioners in high quality ECE settings create opportunities for DLLs to hear books read in their home languages. Picture books read in the home language can help enrich DLLs' vocabulary. Consider contacting staff at your local school district and arrange for bilingual K-12 students to visit and read authentic literature in DLLs' home language for 15 minutes per week. This is a win-win situation for both the older students and the preschoolers—the students get to practice reading in their home languages and the preschoolers get to listen to the big kids read in their home languages. College students and/or community members who speak the home languages of your children may also be able to help.

Sensory supports are incorporated to help bridge culturally different routines. In addition to having photo schedules displayed in the classroom and in file folders for individual DLLs, Jeanne noticed that certain routines were difficult for DLLs to follow and understand. One such routine, cleaning up after lunch, involved multiple steps that were culturally unfamiliar to many of her DLL children. So Jeanne decided to incorporate photos, drawings, real objects, and popular Sesame Street characters to depict how to identify and sort cups and utensils from trash and recycling. Jeanne's sensory supports included carefully constructed visuals on separate baskets that were sequenced for cups and silverware, recycling, and trash as depicted below.



Supporting DLLs During Read Alouds in English

Research with monolingual children has shown that reading books is a powerful and effective tool for helping young children develop complex language and build vocabulary—especially when done interactively (Dickinson et al., 2012). Robust vocabulary development in children as young as 3 years has also been correlated with successful reading comprehension and achievement during the early elementary school years and beyond (Castro, et al., 2011). Reading aloud every day helps children develop a love of books, while simultaneously expanding their background knowledge about the world around them. Learning that print carries a message and is written and read in a particular fashion is another of the many school readiness skills children learn when others read to them. No wonder that ECE programs across the U.S. include Read Alouds in their daily curriculum!

In order to reap the many linguistic and literacy benefits of Read Alouds, DLLs need to understand the language in which the books are read. Interacting with stories by asking questions, sharing background knowledge, and making predictions is difficult for DLLs if the language is new or unfamiliar to them. It then becomes even more difficult, if not impossible, for DLLs to remain engaged during large group story times and learn important new concepts and vocabulary. Making story time accessible to DLLs can be especially challenging in programs where practitioners or staff do not speak the home languages of DLLs.

Marci Jamrose, a Head Start teacher in rural Wisconsin, found herself in such a situation. 50% of the children in her class are Spanish-speaking DLLs. Neither she, her teaching assistant, nor other available Head Start staff spoke Spanish, so Read Aloud time was necessarily conducted in English. Marci loved exposing her children to lots of wonderful literature by reading a different book every day. But she noticed that most of the DLLs in her class were unengaged or frustrated during large group time. Equally concerning, they didn't seem to understand the storyline and weren't grasping new words and concepts. In an effort to help her DLLs understand and be better able to participate in the stories being read, Marci implemented some new strategies in her classroom:

"I now use very specific strategies while doing a Read Aloud to promote participation from my DLLs. It is a process where I read the same book for four days in a row, and sometimes longer if interest warrants. The first day is used for building background knowledge, introducing key vocabulary words and doing a "book look," asking questions and making predictions about what we think the story might be about. The second day I review the background knowledge and the vocabulary words. I then read the story, stopping for conversation and checking our previous predictions. This is an animated reading using actions, intonation of my voice and exaggerated facial expressions. The third and fourth days, I review vocabulary words and introduce a couple more words if needed. I then read the story asking more in-depth questions. I can also use puppets to act out story, or even have the children role play the story using props we have made throughout the week in the art center."

~Marci Jamrose, Rock/Walworth CFS Head Start, Lake Geneva, WI



Marci has incorporated several practices that help ALL children, but are critical for DLLs, to access the rich language associated with Read Alouds:

- **Reading the same book over several days**—This allows DLLs time to absorb the new background knowledge and vocabulary so that they can focus on different aspects of the story each day and gain a deeper understanding of the content and language. Marci was reluctant to do this at first, but was overjoyed at how much vocabulary and story sense ALL children retained with this approach! For the first time, she and her teaching assistant heard DLLs practicing parts of the story on the playground and using new vocabulary words while role playing in the learning centers. DLLs even began acting out the stories at home, which initiated a conversation between Head Start staff and families about the stories children were learning in school.

- **Building background knowledge**—Accessing and building background knowledge is critical for anchoring children’s understanding of new words and concepts. Marci describes how she does this:

“I access and build background knowledge by printing out pictures of the vocabulary words I am using. We then talk about the words and what they know about them. I may have actual props to go along with the words. If the vocabulary word is something we have in the classroom such as “refrigerator,” I may have a child go find the refrigerator in our classroom. I then ask children if they have one of these in their house, what they put in it, etc., depending on where the discussion goes.”
 ~Marci Jamrose, Rock/Walworth CFS Head Start, Lake Geneva, WI



- **Explicitly teaching new vocabulary**—Marci selects engaging books that expand DLLs’ language and learning while being developmentally appropriate. She explicitly calls attention to new words and talks about what they mean. This is important for increasing DLLs’ comprehension of the story. It is recommended that no more than 2-3 words be chosen to teach at a time to young children. Words that are essential or key for understanding the story should be selected. Although it can be challenging to choose so few words, selecting more than 3 makes it difficult for young children to remember and incorporate the new words into their working vocabulary—which is the very purpose of this practice! After practitioners notice that children understand and can produce these new words, 2-3 more new words might be introduced. Much depends on how children

respond, DLLs’ levels of English language development and the amount of background knowledge required to understand the story being read.

- **Using language supports** —Language supports may be sensory, graphic, or interactive. Language supports are essential during Read Alouds to make the content and language comprehensible to DLLs.

Marci uses a wide variety of sensory and interactive supports throughout her literacy activities:

“DLLs lose interest very fast and cannot stay engaged if language supports are not used. The more wordy a lesson becomes, the easier it is for a DLL to become lost. I find that pictures, repetition, animation and music seem to work the best, although I also use puppets and real objects during Read Alouds. I use the limited amount of Spanish I have while teaching vocabulary, or I ask children to tell me the Spanish word for a vocabulary word I do not know. I incorporate many gestures or acting out of words like “running,” “eating,” “climbing,” etc., while trying to teach a concept. I also allow the children to talk to each other during Circle Time because I have noticed that the children who are bilingual will help explain concepts to those who need further clarification in the home language.”
 ~Marci Jamrose, Rock/Walworth CFS Head Start, Lake Geneva, WI



Marci makes sure to have lots of props related to the story she is reading that week available for children to access in the learning centers during choice time. She also enlists all of the children to help make the props using common art materials. In this way, DLLs have multiple opportunities to practice the new vocabulary and language structures associated with the stories being read.

Conclusion

DLLs come to ECE programs with a wide range of background experiences around language, storytelling, picture books and printed text. These experiences are based on the cultures, traditions, and routines of DLLs and their families. Practitioners in high quality ECE programs acknowledge what each child knows and can do, while intentionally building connections to new literacy experiences. These intentional practices may include story telling/acting, creating picture collage stories, inviting family and/or community members to read or record stories, implementing supportive Read Alouds, and offering a collection of culturally and linguistically responsive picture books.

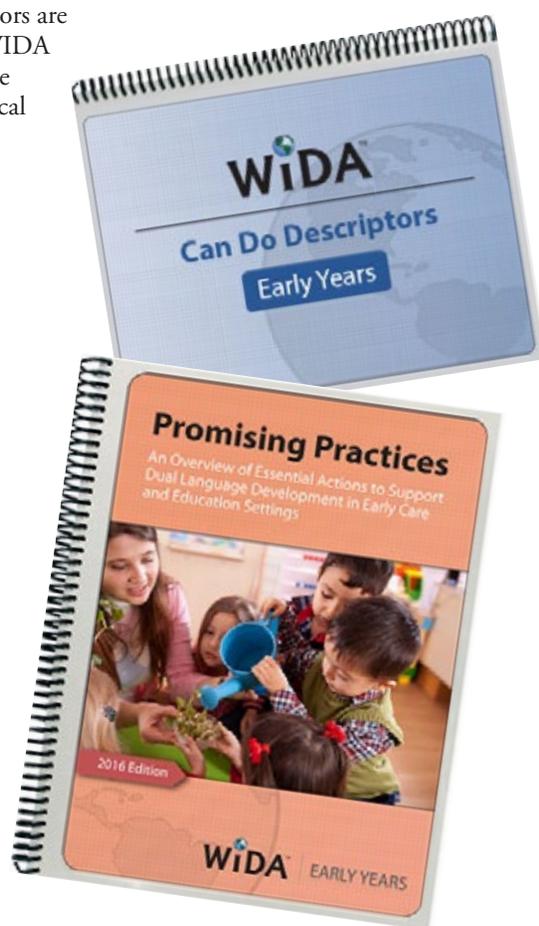
Oral language (e.g., listening and speaking) is central to both teaching and learning about print during the early years. With the support of relevant and effective language supports, DLLs can access their background knowledge and develop the necessary language and literacy skills needed for future academic success.

About WIDA Early Years

WIDA recognizes the educational resources and services developed to support K-12 educators are different than those needed to support practitioners in birth to age 5 settings. Therefore, WIDA Early Years is pleased to introduce a comprehensive set of resources designed to promote the educational equity of young DLLs, ages 2.5-5.5 years. These resources focus on building local practitioner and administrator capacity around supporting early language development.

Many WIDA Early Years resources are available on our webpage: www.wida.us/EarlyYears
The following resources are available for purchase online: www.wceps.org/store/wida/

- **New in 2016!** *WIDA Early Years Can Do Descriptors Booklet*
- **New in 2016!** *WIDA Early Spanish Language Development Standards Resource Guide Available in Spanish and English*
- **New in 2016!** *Promising Practices: An Overview of Essential Actions to Support Dual Language Development in Early Care and Education Settings Available in English Coming soon! Arabic, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Simplified Chinese, and Spanish*
- *WIDA Early English Language Development (E-ELD) Standards Resource Guide Available in English, Arabic, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Simplified Chinese, and Spanish*
- *WIDA Early English Language Development (E-ELD) Standards Poster Available in English*
- *Learning Language Every Day! An Activity Calendar for Children Ages 2.5-5.5 Years and Their Families Available in English, Arabic, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Simplified Chinese, and Spanish*
- *Learning Language Every Day! Puzzles Available in Spanish and English*





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Jeanne Williams

References and Further Reading

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